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# BLACKSAD

## They All Fall Down • Part 2

EUROPE COMICS

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A BIG THANK-YOU TO MAYOR SCHUMANN AND MASTER BUILDER SOLOMON FOR THEIR PRESENCE ON THIS GRAND OCCASION.

INTERBOROUGH TRANSIT COMP

NEW YORK CITY TUNNEL AUTHORITY

TODAY, WE BEGIN WORK ON THE TUNNEL THAT WILL LINK OUR TWO BOROUGHS.

I'D ALSO LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WELCOME GOVERNOR ROCKEFELLER AND HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP SPELLMAN...

zZz

zZz

...HIGH COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION MR. JOHNSON...

...DEPUTY MAYOR WILSON...

...JUSTICE DEPARTMENT CHIEF WARREN...

WHACK!

...CHAIR OF THE URBAN PLANNING COMMISSION MR. FELT, AND...

TRAGIC, BUT KENNETH CLARKE'S DEATH COMES AT THE RIGHT TIME. HE WAS A REAL BALL-BUSTER.

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT FATHER McGINLEY.

YOU CAN REST EASY, SCHUMANN.

THE UNION HAS BEEN DECAPITATED. I DOUBT THEY CAN MOBILIZE FOR A SUBWAY STRIKE.

I'M GLAD TO HEAR IT.

DURING AN ELECTION YEAR, BETTER TO AVOID **ANY** CONTROVERSY IN FRONT OF THE MEDIA... LIKE YOUR THEATER CLASH THE OTHER DAY.

AND NOW IT'S TIME FOR THE **OFFICIAL GROUNDBREAKING!**

WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN, MR. MAYOR.

NO, IT WON'T. I'VE AUTHORIZED BUILDING A PERMANENT AMPHITHEATER ON CENTRAL PARK'S GREAT LAWN, PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY IRIS ALLEN.

AN AMPHITHEATER?

MR. MAYOR, IF WE GIVE IN TO THE DEMANDS OF THESE PEOPLE...

WHERE YOU SEE ONLY PEOPLE, I SEE LOST VOTES AND BAD PUBLICITY.

RELAX, SOLOMON. THEY HAVE A PERMIT, BUT NO FUNDING. PROBLEM SOLVED.

WE CHALK UP POINTS IN THE OPINION POLLS...

...WHILE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK QUIETLY GOES UNDER, **WITHOUT** THE POLICE BATONS OUR REPORTERS LOVE TO HATE.

AFTER YOU, "MASTER BUILDER."

SMILE, SOLOMON.

WITH THE DEATH OF KENNETH CLARKE, THE UNION FINDS ITSELF ORPHANED ONCE AGAIN. TRAGEDY SEEMS TO FOLLOW US EVERYWHERE.

WE STILL HAVEN'T RECOVERED FROM THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ZACHARY ALLEN, KENNETH'S PREDECESSOR AS PRESIDENT.

IN ZACH'S CASE, WE WEREN'T EVEN ABLE TO BURY HIS BODY.

THOSE OF US WHO SURVIVED THE GREAT DEPRESSION, LIKE ZACH'S WIDOW IRIS, HERE WITH US TODAY, BELIEVED WE'D LEFT THOSE HARD TIMES BEHIND.

SADLY, OUR STRUGGLE IS MORE NECESSARY THAN EVER, AND WE MUST PRESS ON WITHOUT KENNETH.

REST IN PEACE, OLD FRIEND.

IRIS HAD NOW LOST BOTH HER HUSBAND AND HER BEST FRIEND. HER BEHAVIOR SEEMED MORE THAN JUSTIFIED.

AND I OWED HER AN APOLOGY FOR HAVING FAILED TO PREVENT KENNETH'S MURDER.

LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO RAIN ANY MINUTE... COFFEE?

ALL RIGHT. I KNOW A BAR NEARBY.

DURING THE DEPRESSION YEARS, ZACH AND I OFTEN CAME HERE AT THE END OF THE DAY.

WE USED TO TALK LATE INTO THE NIGHT.

UNTIL THIS SAME BARKEEP HAD HAD ENOUGH--AND THREW US OUT!

WE DREAMED UP A THOUSAND AND ONE PROJECTS...

...TO REBUILD A WORLD THAT HAD FALLEN APART.

IN THOSE DAYS, I WAS WORKING FOR THE FEDERAL THEATRE PROJECT.

THERE'S NOT A SINGLE PLACE IN THIS COUNTRY WHERE WE DIDN'T PERFORM FOR THE LESS PRIVILEGED.

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ZACH CONTINUED FIGHTING TO IMPROVE WORKING CONDITIONS FOR THE MOLES. THEY WERE HIT ESPECIALLY HARD BY THE CRISIS.

THANKS TO MILLIONS OF UNSUNG SUPPORTERS, THE COUNTRY WAS ABLE TO RECOVER. THERE WAS REAL **HOPE** IN THE AIR...

...PERHAPS BECAUSE WE THOUGHT THERE WAS NO FURTHER TO FALL.

THERE'S **ALWAYS** FURTHER TO FALL.

HOPE AND SOLIDARITY FLOURISH IN POVERTY AND ARE FED BY FAMINE. BUT THEY WITHER AND DIE ONCE THE BILLS GET PAID.

THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT, TOO. UNTIL I MET ZACH.

**WE'RE CLOSED!**

SOCIETY OWES A GREAT DEBT TO PEOPLE LIKE IRIS AND ZACH.

BUT THEY LEAVE ME WITH A BITTER TASTE. IT'S THE CYNIC IN ME.

TWENTY YEARS AFTER ZACH'S DEATH, IRIS WAS STILL IN LOVE WITH HIM.

BEAUTIFUL, UNCONDITIONAL LOVE THAT TRANSCENDS ABSENCE. A FEELING I KNEW WELL.

IN THE END, IT DIDN'T RAIN.

AND I WAS COLD, INSIDE AND OUT, SO DECIDED TO WALK...

...*"THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC"* PLAYING IN MY HEAD ALL THE WAY HOME.

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IRIS HADN'T SAID ONE WORD ABOUT KENNETH ALL NIGHT, YET HIS DEATH HAD PLAINLY REOPENED THE WOUNDS OF ZACH'S DISAPPEARANCE.

OF COURSE, I WAS LEFT WITH THE HORRIBLE FEELING OF HAVING **FAILED** POOR KENNETH.

CALL IT MY GUILTY CONSCIENCE OR AN EXCESS OF ZEAL.

IN ANY CASE, I WAS DETERMINED TO FIND THE BAT'S KILLER.

FARUMFER HAD TOLD ME ABOUT A DECOMMISSIONED RAIL TRACK, WHICH EVERYONE THOUGHT WAS A MYTH.

AN OLD, SECRET BRANCH LINE USED BY PRESIDENTS TRAVELING INCOGNITO TO THE CITY.

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I'D NOT ONLY FOUND THE PASSAGE THROUGH WHICH THE ASSASSIN HAD FLED, I'D DISCOVERED HIS HIDEOUT.

THE RAILCAR WAS SO CLEAN AND ORDERLY, YOU'D SWEAR THE PRESIDENT WAS STILL USING IT.

EXCEPT THAT THE PAINTING'S GRIM SUBJECT WAS NO HEAD OF STATE.

THE GUY **HAD** TO HAVE AN EXIT TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

AN ABANDONED ELEVATOR SHAFT LINKED THE PLATFORM...

...TO A LUXURY HOTEL...

...OF PRESIDENTIAL CACHET...

...WITH AN EQUALLY DISCREET EXIT...

...VIA THE BACK DOOR.

BIT OF A BRUSH, MISTAH? LITTLE POLISH FOR YOUR SHOES?

ZIP!

PAWS **OFF,** BRAT!

HEY! THESE ARE **BIRTHMARKS.** I AIN'T NO THIEF!

I'M SORRY, KID. I SHOULD'VE TAKEN YOU FOR A SUPERHERO INSTEAD.

EXACTLY! SUPER-MANNY, SHOESHINE, ATCHA SERVICE!

HERE'S A COUPLE BUCKS. IN TURN, I WANT YOU TO WATCH THAT DOOR FOR A DAY OR TWO.

WOW! YOU'RE GENEROUS, MISTAH!

LET ME KNOW IF YOU SEE ANYONE GOING IN OR OUT.

I'M **COUNTING** ON YOU, SUPER-MANNY!

NO OFFENSE, MR. SOLOMON, BUT...

NATIONAL AUTOMOBILE SHOW

...DO YOU REALLY **NEED** THESE BIG CROWDS?

EVERY YEAR I COME TO THIS SHOW FOR PLEASURE...

Tickets

Tickets

...AND FOR ITS WINDOW INTO THE FUTURE.

THE PUBLIC IS THE PRICE OF ADMISSION.

Cadillac

Chevrolet

GM

I'M SURPRISED YOU'RE SO INTERESTED IN ALL THIS, GIVEN THAT YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO DRIVE.

I'M NOT AN ASTRONAUT EITHER, BUT IF I HAD THE CHANCE TO BOARD A ROCKET SHIP, I WOULDN'T HESITATE FOR A SECOND.

GOOD DAY, GENTLEMEN. A RIDE IN THE CYCLONE?

GLADLY!

EEeEEEEEEEEEE!

AAHHH!

DON'T MISS MACBETH, BY THE IRIS ALLEN PLAYERS.

SEASON GRAND FINALE FOR SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK!

TICKET SALES GO TO FINANCE THE NEW AMPHITHEATER!

A DRAMA ABOUT POWER, BETRAYAL, AND MURDER. YOU WON'T LEARN ANYTHING NEW, BUT YOU'LL SURELY BE ENTERTAINED.

PASSING THE HAT WON'T BUILD YOUR AMPHITHEATER.

RRRRIP!

IT'S JUST A START. I HOPE WE'LL MAKE ENOUGH TO LAY THE FOUNDATION, AT LEAST.

41

FOR DAYS I HAD SLEPT LITTLE AND EATEN EVEN LESS.

I WAS ABOUT TO FIX THE FOOD PROBLEM WHEN GOOD NEWS CAME IN THE FORM OF A RACCOON.

SUPER-MANNY HAD SEEN A **GULL** SURFACE FROM THE UNDERGROUND DEN. IT **HAD** TO BE KENNETH'S KILLER.

MY VERY COMPETENT PARTNER HAD FOLLOWED THAT BIRD TO BELLEVUE HOSPITAL.

AT RECEPTION I LEARNED THE SUSPECT HAD COME TO VISIT A PATIENT.

THE OLDEST PATIENT IN THE INFAMOUS IRON LUNG WARD.

HIS NAME WAS...

... DILL.

THIS WARD IS **OFF-LIMITS** TO VISITORS.

I'D HIT MY HEAD AGAINST **BRICK WALLS** SOFTER THAN THIS NURSE.

IT WASN'T THE PLACE FOR A SCENE. I'D NEED A DIFFERENT STRATEGY...

...TO LEARN WHO THESE GULLS WERE.

♪ OH! THEY SAY SOME ♫ PEOPLE LONG AGO WERE SEARCHING FOR A DIFF'RENT TUNE ONE THAT THEY COULD CROON, AS ONLY THEY CAN...

♪ ...THEY ONLY HAD THE RHYTHM SO THEY STARTED SWAYING TO AND FRO... ♫

♪ THEY DIDN'T KNOW JUST WHAT TO USE THAT IS HOW THE BLUES REALLY BEGAN...

WHAT THE HELL ARE WE DOING HERE WITH ALL THESE **SNOBS?**

YOU'RE AN ACTOR, RACHE. YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF A GOOD DISGUISE.

MY DARLING, **DAZZLING** IRIS!

AND YOUR **CHARMING** COMPANION IS...?

ON MY WAY TO THE CAN.

CURIOUS NAME.

WHAT SHE LACKS IN TACT, SHE MAKES UP FOR IN TALENT. YOU **MUST** SEE HER PLAY MACBETH.

MACBETH? I CERTAINLY WON'T MISS THAT. WHERE ON EARTH DO YOU FIND THE ENERGY TO RUN YOUR SCHOOL **AND** THE FESTIVAL AT THE SAME TIME?

NO IDEA! THANK GOODNESS I WAS RECENTLY ABLE TO CONVINCE AN OLD FRIEND TO PARTNER WITH ME. REALLY, **ANY** HELP IS WELCOME.

AND TO THAT END...

FRIENDS! YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE!

YOU KNOW I'VE NEVER NEEDED AN **EXCUSE** TO HOST A PARTY...

**HA! HA! HA!**

**HA! HA! HA!**

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BUT THIS TIME, THE EVENT IS **WELL** WORTH IT!

IRIS ALLEN, ALLOW ME TO PRESENT THE **GRAND TOTAL** DONATED BY TONIGHT'S GENEROUS GUESTS!

CITY BANK

THE GREAT LAWN AMPHITHEATER IS A **REALITY!**

LONG LIVE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK!

BRAVO!

TO THE THEATER!

I SWEAR, THE NEXT PIG WHO PUTS HIS HAND ON MY BUTT IS GETTING A **TRAY** TO THE **HEAD!**

I'VE GOT FACE CRAMPS FROM FORCING A SMILE ALL NIGHT.

I DIDN'T STUDY LAW JUST TO KISS UP TO **THOSE** FAT ASSES!

?!

WELL, WELL... CONGRATS ON YOUR LITTLE **HIT PIECE** ABOUT IRIS AND THE AUTO SHOW. ONLY A SOLOMON FLUNKY WOULD'VE WRITTEN SUCH DRIVEL!

**DRIVEL?** LOOK, SWEETHEART, YOU COULDN'T SPOT A GOOD ARTICLE IF IT WERE RIGHT UNDER YOUR NOSE!

HERE, IN THIS VERY PENTHOUSE, I'VE JUST INTERVIEWED THE CITY'S MOST **EMINENT** REPRESENTATIVES!

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THIS CITY'S **REAL** REPRESEN-TATIVES...

...JUST LEFT THE BATHROOM, MORON.

YOU CAN SEE 'EM IN THE STREETS, IN THE STORES, OR IN THE SUBWAY.

WHAT'S GOING DOWN IN THERE IS A COSTUME BALL. A **FICTION.**

GRINNING WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING, JUST LIKE YOUR DEAR SOLOMON.

UNTIL YOU CAN REALLY SEE WHAT'S BEHIND THE MASK, WEEKLY, YOU'LL **NEVER** BE A TRUE JOURNALIST!

YOU GULLS DEFINITELY HAVE A FONDNESS FOR LANDFILLS.

45

AND YOU, FOR BULLDOZERS.

I HAD GREAT PLANS FOR THIS SPOT: BURY ALL THE GARBAGE AND BUILD A NEW CITY PARK RIGHT HERE.

WHAT ABOUT HIM?

OLAF?

HE HAS SUCH A FINE SENSE OF SMELL THAT HE CAN SNIFF OUT ANYTHING, EVEN IN **THIS** FOUL PLACE.

SNIF

SNIF

THE NURSE TOLD ME A FELINE P.I. WAS SNOOPING AROUND THE HOSPITAL.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT DILL. AS OF TOMORROW, I WILL **PERSONALLY** KEEP HIM AWAY FROM PRYING EYES.

BUT YOU HAVE TO DO **YOUR** PART, TOO.

IRIS ALLEN THREATENED ME PUBLICLY, AND I HAVE A FEELING SHE KNOWS **EVERYTHING.**

THOUGH I DON'T KNOW HOW. I SUSPECT KENNETH MIGHT HAVE TOLD HER THE SECRET BEFORE DYING.

YOU REALIZE WHAT THAT MEANS, SHELBY.

I WON'T DO IT AGAIN, SOLOMON.

ALL I'M SAYING IS THAT IF THE TRUTH COMES TO LIGHT, THE CITY WILL FIND ITSELF WITHOUT A "MASTER BUILDER"...

AND DILL WITHOUT AIR.

LET'S GO, OLAF... SOMETHING WRONG?

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C'MON, PICK UP, RACHEL!

TELEPHONE

YOU'LL SEE, YOU'RE GOING TO BE **VERY** PROUD OF ME... I WANT YOU TO BE THE FIRST TO KNOW WHO'S BEHIND THE MASK... PICK **UP!**

TAP! TAP!

!?!

MR. SOLOMON IS WAITING. TODAY YOU'RE TO SEE THE WORK IN THE TUNNEL UNDER THE RIVER.

THE TUNNEL! I TOTALLY FORGOT...

FOLLOW ME. THE CAR IS NEARBY.

HELLO? WHO'S THERE?

...TODAY IS YOUR CHANCE TO TOUR THE VERY **HEART** OF THE CITY.

MY DEAR WEEKLY...

47

I'M WELL AWARE THAT CEREMONIES AND CELEBRATIONS DON'T ESPECIALLY MAKE FOR A GOOD **FEATURE** ARTICLE.

YEAH, THOSE OFFICIAL SHINDIGS ARE A REAL KILLER, I HAVE TO SAY...

TODAY'S A HOLIDAY, SO YOU CAN TAKE ALL THE PHOTOS YOU WANT WITHOUT ANY FOREMEN HOUNDING YOU.

THEY'RE SUCH **STICKLERS** FOR SECURITY!

SPLOTCH

SPLOTCH

THESE PANTS WOULD MAKE A GREAT SHOT, RIGHT?

IT DOESN'T BOTHER ME ONE IOTA IF PEOPLE SEE ME GETTING DIRTY AND TAKING RISKS.

JUST LOOK AT ALL THESE COFFERDAMS!

IMPRESSIVE.

WHAT'S MOST DANGEROUS ISN'T THE **FALL.**

IT'S THE LACK OF OXYGEN INSIDE, CAUSING LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS...

...EVEN **DEATH.**

AREN'T YOU COMING? I THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO FOLLOW ME CLOSELY.

MAYBE WE SHOULD'VE WORN HELMETS.

YOU FEEL A CHILL?

**YAAA!**

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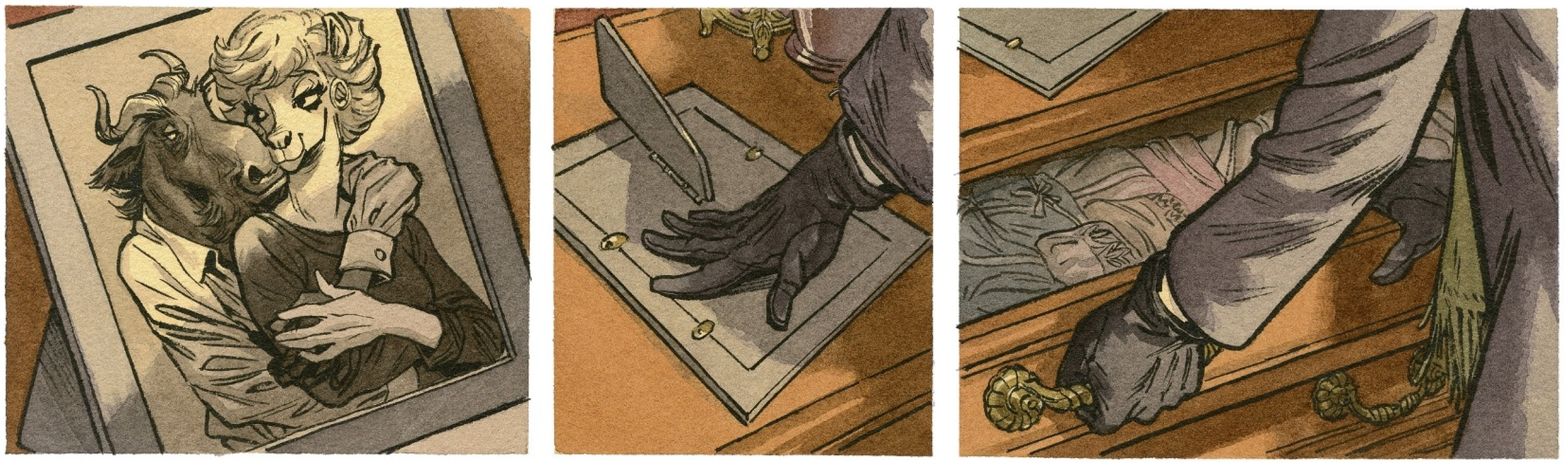
WHERE THE HELL IS IRIS?

I DUNNO... I LEFT HER AT HER PLACE OVER AN HOUR AGO...



SHOULDN'T IT HAVE STARTED BY NOW?

THE PROGRAM SAYS SIX O'CLOCK.

ANY LONGER AND WE'LL BE CAUGHT IN A DOWNPOUR.

WE **CAN'T** HOLD OFF ANYMORE!

SOMEONE **HAS** TO REPLACE IRIS AS LADY MACBETH!

THE AUDIENCE IS **WAITING!**

I'M REALLY WORRIED!

OOPS!

BASTARD!

BAP!

ARGH!

51

LOOK, I THINK WE GOTTA CANCEL THE PERFORMANCE...

EXCUSE ME! I'M LOOKING FOR IRIS ALLEN. I'M HER NEW PARTNER.

WAIT... I KNOW HER! I SAW HER ACT WITH IRIS'S COMPANY A FEW YEARS AGO.

I REMEMBER, TOO. IN PHILLY, SHE PLAYED LADY MACBETH.

WE COULDN'T HAVE ASKED FOR A BETTER STAND-IN.

WHEN SHALL WE THREE MEET AGAIN IN THUNDER, LIGHTNING, OR IN RAIN?

52

IT IS DONE. THE BELL INVITES ME.

HEAR IT NOT, DUNCAN, FOR IT IS A KNELL THAT SUMMONS THEE TO HEAVEN...

...OR TO HELL.

I'LL GO NO MORE. I AM AFRAID TO THINK WHAT I HAVE DONE. LOOK ON'T AGAIN I DARE NOT.

INFIRM OF PURPOSE! GIVE ME THE DAGGERS. IF HE DO BLEED, I'LL GILD THE FACES OF THE GROOMS WITHAL, FOR IT MUST SEEM THEIR GUILT.

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AWAKE, AWAKE! RING THE ALARUM-BELL. MURDER AND TREASON!

SHAKE OFF THIS DOWNY SLEEP, DEATH'S COUNTERFEIT, AND LOOK ON DEATH ITSELF!

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Alma...

TO BE CONTINUED IN PART 3.

*Some just pass through,*
*others sow seeds as they do.*
*In memory of my mother, Toñi.*
*JDC*

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